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BY

GOLDWIN SMITH

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JESUS OF NAZARETH is held by Trinitarians to have been God and Man, by Unitarians to have been man, though in his spiritual gifts and teachings near, above all men, to God. Among those who believe him to have been God, there are divisions about his relation to the other persons of the Trinity. Whether the third person of the Trinity proceeds from him as well as from the first person is a question which separates the Eastern from the Western Church. But all Churches agree that he was man. "Perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting," he is called in the Athanasian Creed. Perfect man he could not be without the conditions, affections, liabilities,

and limitations of humanity. The Supernatural is here not impugned, but simply put out of sight; as it may be without abjuring the Spiritual or anything to which the Spiritual really points. It is only to be said that if there is a God and He manifests Himself to us, it is through the highest human character that He is manifested, and most through the highest of all.

As to the miracles by which the divinity of Jesus is held to be attested, it may be said that the halo round this head is brighter, purer, more moral, and, if rationality is compatible with miracle, more rational, than the halo round the head of any other prophet or saint in history. Two only of the Gospel miracles seem in this sense to repel us; that of the banishment of the devils into the Gadarene swine, and that of the barren fig tree. Compare with this the miracles of the Old Testament; the destruction of the first-born of Egypt, the stopping of the sun to prolong carnage, the slaying of forty-two children by bears to avenge an affront to the prophet; you have the difference between

the spirit of the Old and that of the New Testament.

Our materials for the life of this man, who, of all his race, has exerted the greatest influence, are unhappily poor and precarious. His personality of course cannot be questioned. It is attested by Roman historians, Tacitus and Suetonius, who mention his religious leadership and his crucifixion. Paul had not seen him, but had conversed with those who had seen him, and was profoundly impressed with his character. Devotion to him is Paul's religion. No imagination could have created such a character, with a religious and ethical system to correspond, and given it an influence so wide and so enduring. Nor could anybody have invented so wonderful and striking a mode of teaching by apophthegm and parable as that which, adapted at first to peasant audiences, has kept its hold upon the mind of the world. But for the Life, we have to rely on the first three, or Synoptic, Gospels; all of which are anonymous, and of date unknown; without claim to being the work of eye-witnesses;

evolved by a process which we cannot trace from pre-existing materials, written or oral, now lost; not seldom at variance with each other; full of miracle; and, after all, not biographies properly speaking, since they tell us next to nothing of the first thirty years, but collections of memorable sayings and doings of Jesus in a loosely biographical or anecdotic form. The Fourth Gospel is unavailable as historical evidence. It is plainly Alexandrian theology, with its characteristic Logos, in a biographical frame. It is not the work of a Palestinian Jew. It makes Judea the scene, whereas the real scene of the ministry was, and the real holy land of the Christian is, not Judea but Galilee; Judea is the scene of the close. Though the actual date of the Gospels cannot be fixed, we may be pretty sure that the epoch of their composition was that at which the memory of the founder's sayings transmitted by oral tradition was beginning to fade, and the desire of preserving them was felt.

That there was time between the events and the records for myth to grow, is manifest

on the face of the records themselves. Memory, however, was strong in the days when writing was scarce, and the sayings of Jesus may have been well preserved.

We who wish simply to hear the word, do not take our stand in Jerusalem, with its grim environs, its sumptuous temple, its altar reeking with bloody sacrifice, its narrow Judaism, its haughty Sanhedrim, its self-righteous Pharisees, its worldly Sadducees, and the ceremonialism and casuistry which are presently to assume a portentous form in the Talmud. We take our stand on a hillside by the lake of Gennesaret, with the snowy mountains in view and the sea not far away, amid the hamlets, the corn-fields, the sheep-folds, the vineyards, the olive grounds, the lilies and oleanders of Galilee, all that supplies the rural imagery of the parables. Around us is a crowd of peasants and fishermen, many of whom have been drawn by the fame of the miracles, some perhaps by the hope of miraculous cure. We for our part have come only to hear the word.

Opposite to us on the hillside is a group of

twelve men, peasants and fishermen, round one central figure. That central figure comes forward to speak to us. He is Jesus of Nazareth, the Founder of Christendom. The name of Cæsar is said to be the greatest in history. In the history of empire and conquest it is. But what is it to the name of this man, which forms the dividing landmark of the centuries? So much may be said, and we may rejoice in the superiority of the word to the sword, without allowing ourselves to be swept away by the tide of pious eloquence and ascribing the progress of humanity during nineteen centuries to a single life.

To the personal influence exerted by Jesus nineteen centuries after his death, and the devotion of which he is still the object, there is absolutely no parallel in history; before them the glory of Sakyamouni and of Mahomet pales. This is no doubt to be ascribed largely to deification. But it is also due in no small measure to spiritual impression. In the Unitarian it has no other source. A figure less divine could hardly have been deified, much less have continued to be dei-

fied and be the object of adoring love, not only to pious hearts, but to high intellects down even to the present day.

What is Jesus like? What would we not give to know? There is no authentic portrait or tradition. The Byzantine portraits are plainly works of the crude Byzantine fancy. Of the impression on Veronica's kerchief or on the fabulous winding sheet nothing need be said. They are like a number of other spurious relics, millstones round the neck of the Roman Catholic Church in this her hour of trial. Renan's idea of the peculiarly Jewish beauty of Jesus, as well as the sentimental incidents which he connects with it, are the offspring of his somewhat Parisian imagination. We are apt to think of the face rather as that of the Man of Sorrows. But in this we antedate the Agony in the Garden. Art at its highest has striven in later times to produce something which would satisfy our conceptions, but it has striven in vain. To paint a union of the human and divine natures was beyond its power. Raphael in his *Madonna di San Sisto* has perhaps suc-

ceeded in producing a supernatural child by putting mature expression into a baby's face. Of this we may be sure, that in the features of the Great Teacher, whatever their form, shone the spiritual light which was to lighten the world.

Dogmatic religion and the creeds have filled our imaginations with the harrowing scenes of the passion, which from the dogmatic point of view are overwhelming in their interest as the consummation of the Atonement. Any religion, to fit humanity, must to a certain extent be a religion of sorrow. But we have no reason to assume that the preaching of the kingdom of heaven amid smiling scenery, in buoyant air, beside the blue and sail-studded lake, by a youthful enthusiast full of hope to a simple audience of believers, was melancholy, or that the countenance of the preacher was not bright.

The garb, it seems, being that of the unchanging East, we know. It was a long and closely fitting undergarment of wool, with a mantle loosely thrown over it, a girdle, a sort of caftan on the head, and sandals on the feet.

The language of Jesus is Aramaic, a Semitic dialect, and a rude cousin of the Hebrew. Greek is spoken in those parts by the cultured, but not by the Carpenter's Son, or by the peasants to whom he preaches. The Greek version of Jesus's words, therefore, which alone we have, is a translation, a fact to be borne in mind. He is a native of Nazareth, in a dell twelve miles from the lake. His home, if he can be said to have a home, is now the neighbouring town of Capernaum, where there is a Roman garrison and customs station. The people of Nazareth had failed to recognize their spiritual master in the Carpenter's Son.

Jesus is a Galilean by birth, and no doubt of Jewish race, though few will now maintain the genuineness of either of the two divergent genealogies framed to prove that he was a descendant of David. But the population of Galilee was very mixed, and was despised by the pure blood of Abraham at Jerusalem. Its speech had the provincial accent which betrayed the nativity of Peter. Consequently it was less tribal than the population of Jerusalem and more human; fitted therefore to be

the birthplace of the Jew who was destined to break down the wall of Judaism from within, and to enlarge the religion of a race into the religion of humanity.

Jesus is about thirty years old, ripe for action, yet with his enthusiasm not yet chilled by age. He is the son of a carpenter, and though we are told nothing about his youth, he may be taken to have plied his father's trade; often, however, as we may surmise, laying down his tools to plunge in thought. His education must have been simple. He can read and no doubt write. He has been taught the Law and is familiar with the sacred books of his nation. His knowledge of the books is uncritical. He takes the book of Jonah for history. He believes in the genuineness of the apocalyptic book of Daniel, and its mystical "Son of Man" has taken hold upon his mind. So have the prophets who, like Isaiah, Amos, Hosea, and Micah, set mercy above sacrifice. He shares with his nation the hope of a Messiah. Of science or scientific conceptions of the universe or man, he, like all around him, is

totally devoid. He has made trips to Jerusalem for the festivals, otherwise his knowledge of the world and its doings has probably been almost bounded by his little hill-town and its neighbourhood. He is perfectly open to belief in miracle and to such popular ideas as that of demoniacal possession. To philosophy, literature, and art he is a stranger. So is he to politics and to commerce. He must have been a lonely and original thinker, little aided or tempered by intercourse with other minds. He is unmarried. He is a wandering preacher, and, though he has a mother and brothers, he has no domestic ties.

One day, as Jesus was musing, the spiritual impulse prevailed; he threw down his tools and went forth to proclaim the kingdom of God. Whence did the impulse come? There was around him a general ferment of rebellion, political and religious, against the pagan dominion of Rome and its satraps, the house of Herod. But to this Jesus is a stranger, saving that he may be stirred by the general unrest. Reaction from prevailing evils, social and moral, had given birth to the ascetic and

utopian sect of the Essenes, but there is no trace of anything distinctly Essenist in the histories of Jesus. The preaching of John the Baptist is another sign of the spiritual ferment. Jesus was evidently stirred by the appearance of John, at whose hands he sought baptism as his consecration to his mission and whom he continued to revere. But John the Baptist was an anchorite; Jesus was none; and it is implied that Jesus had felt his prophetic calling when he came to receive confirmation of his mission at John's hands. We can only suppose that Jesus, like Sakya-mouni, was moved by pity for the general lot of humanity. It seems that in the further East at least, men are easily moved to don the garb and go forth on the errand of the preacher. Opposition to the formalism of the Pharisee, though afterwards intensely developed, can hardly have been the original motive, since the centre of Pharisaism was far away. Nor can we suppose that wealth in Galilee was strikingly oppressive; we should rather suppose that an equality of rude plenty was the rule.

Now Jesus speaks. What has he to tell us? Does he bring authentic tidings from the other world? The answer must be that he does not. He does not undertake to unfold to us the mystery of our being. He does not undertake to tell us the origin of evil, of which his only explanation is the existence of a spirit of evil, Satan, dividing the world with the spirit of good, as, in the Zendavest, Ahriman divides the world with Ormazd. He embraces the belief in a resurrection which was current among the Pharisees, and makes a thrilling use in hortatory discourses of the awful imagery of the judgment-day. But of the truth of that doctrine, though the doctrine is fundamental, he does not give us positive proof or even such distinct and explicit assurance as one charged with revelation might have been expected to give. He solves none of the difficulties connected with the restoration of the bodies the particles of which have been dispersed; with the cases of infants, heathen, and savages; or with the arbitrary division of the human race into those deserving of paradise and those deserving of hell,

characters being so mixed and variable as they are. The apologue of Dives and Lazarus, plainly fictitious, almost fantastic, could not have been uttered by one who knew and was sent to unfold the awful secret of the spirit world. The same might be said of the argument that because God is called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob those patriarchs must be still alive. Religious philosophers without number have ever since been labouring to solve the mystery of our being, to account for the existence of evil, to prove the immortality of the soul. This they would not have had to do if the Gospel had revealed it all.

On the other hand, Jesus did preach doctrines so new and so momentous, doctrines which took such hold, and have had so immense an effect, that they almost deserve the name of revelations. He preached not only the unity, but the universal fatherhood of God. The God of the Jew was one; but even if he was sole, and there were not other gods for other nations, he was not the father of all. He was the father only of the Chosen People.

He was not the father even of the Samaritan. Sacrifice could be offered to him acceptably only in the holy city. He was far more moral than the tribal deities of the nations, as well as the sole God of his tribe; in both respects more capable of being exalted and liberalized into a universal God. But he was tribal after all, and tribal he would still have been when, as the Jew expected, all the idols of the Gentiles had fallen prostrate before him, and his dominion, with that of his chosen people, had been extended over the whole earth.

Socrates, Plato, and the Roman Stoics Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and Epictetus, were in their way theists. In a way only. They used sometimes the singular word "god," sometimes the plural "gods"; and they continued to pay their offerings to the State divinities. The dying request of Socrates was the payment of an offering to Æsculapius. The Antonines, the best of Stoics, even persecuted for nonconformity to the State religion. Moreover, the philosophers' deity was not, like that of Jesus, a father, the object of

love, communion, and prayer, but merely a governor of the universe and a supreme support of virtue; hardly personal; a conception confined to members of an exalted sect, not preached by them to the common herd of men. No church or religious community of any kind was the result.

True, Jesus does not undertake to explain fully the relations of God to man. How can the father of all allow so many of his children to be lost? How can he have made the gate of salvation narrow, that of destruction wide? How can mankind, with their infinitely graded characters, be justly divided into sheep and goats? How can the potter condemn the pots which himself has made? These are questions which Jesus does not attempt to solve. But he does preach the universal fatherhood of God. We are listening to Jesus, the man with profound spiritual insight, not with supernatural knowledge of the ways of Deity.

With the universal fatherhood of God, Jesus proclaims the universal brotherhood of man. This is the end of tribalism, the inauguration of humanity. God, it is said in

the Acts, has made all nations of one blood to dwell together on the face of the earth. Here is a revolution greater than any political or social revolution in history. In the Greek or Latin writers you may find faint breathings of a common humanity; you will find no recognition of universal brotherhood. To the polished Greek other races were barbarians, fitted by nature to be slaves. The Jew could not see a brother in the uncircumcised. In the early period of the Roman Empire there were uncircumcised conformists to Judaism; but they were outside the pale. Circumcision remained an insurmountable bar. By an effort which we can now hardly measure Jesus threw down that bar, making the Gentile the brother of the Jew. He may have wavered, he may at times have said that he was come not to destroy the law but to fulfil it, that he was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel, that it was not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs; though the record is doubtful and these passages may express the qualms, not of the teacher, but of Judaizing reporters of his

words. What the ultimate effect of his teachings was is plain, nor can we doubt that his true interpreter in this respect was Paul.

The world, it is said, was united by the Roman Empire. That world was only the circle of nations round the Mediterranean. The plunder of all those nations made up the bloated opulence of Rome. The blood of gladiators from all those nations was mingled in the Roman amphitheatre. Slaves from them all pined in the horrible slave quarters of the Roman lord. Over them all ruled Roman Governors, some, no doubt, like Pliny, but some like Pilate. The inspiration of Jesus sent forth missionaries to found an empire not of the sword but of the word, which should know no limits but humanity, which should give and not take away, and which, when the Roman Empire had died of its own vices, would fill the void with the new life of Christendom.

Let the creed, the liturgy, the fane, the ecclesiastical order be what they may, the universal fatherhood of God, which implies God's paternal care for us now and forever, and the

universal brotherhood of man, are the essence and the sum of all religion. If we have ceased to believe in them, the end of religion has come. We cannot go back to the Pantheon; and the religion of humanity without a God, to which we are invited to go forward, though it may be an enthusiasm, is not a religion at all. Science must take the world in hand and do what is in its power to do for mankind. That we are losing our belief in the universal brotherhood of man, if not so consciously or avowedly our belief in the universal fatherhood of God, is shown by this outburst of Imperialism with its tribal theories of dominion and its contempt for human right.

Another revolution, momentous in its way, is the treatment of poverty by Jesus. Poverty theretofore had been the general object of contempt, though it might be affected by the Cynic, not from humility but from philosophic pride. "Hapless poverty," says a Roman satirist and moralist, "is in nothing more pitiable than in the ridicule which it brings on men." Hebrew prophets had nobly

denounced oppression of the poor and rebuked the insolence of the rich. Jesus not only defends the cause of the poor, but regards poverty as the state most favourable to the reception of the Gospel and to the spiritual frame of mind. Wealth he treats as an obstacle to spiritual life. If a rich man would find entrance into the Kingdom of God, he must sell all that he has and give to the poor. Not that Jesus says that wealth in itself is sin. The moral of the apologue of Dives and Lazarus may fairly be taken to be that there will be a change of lots in the next world, not that wealth as wealth is as a matter of course doomed to hell. Nor is Jesus, as some have called him, a socialist or a leveller. He preaches no social revolution. It is with the Kingdom of God that he deals throughout, not in any sense with the kingdom of this world. He recognizes the right of property while he enjoins unbounded almsgiving. So after him did his church at Jerusalem, in which, though it is called communist, the gifts were free. "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in

thine own power?" says Peter to Ananias. Nor, whatever might be the practical effect of unbounded almsgiving, does Jesus say anything to sanction mendicancy. There is nothing to show that he would have looked with complacency on a begging Friar. His own bread, though he did not labour with his hands, was earned by giving the bread of life to the world. So in its degree was the bread of those whom he sent forth to preach the Gospel, though they were to live upon the charity of their hearers. Poverty is not in itself a merit, nor when it is abject or when it is caused by idleness and accompanied by mendicancy, as we see it hanging about the door of the church or the monastery in superstitious countries, has it any relation to spiritual life. Yet riches are deceitful, and it is always hard for a rich man to keep his heart above them and thus to enter into the Kingdom of God.

Apart altogether from asceticism or even from almsgiving, there has run through Christendom a vein of sympathetic interest in the character and lives of the poor to

which a parallel will hardly be found outside the Christian pale. The sentiment finds expression in our fiction and our poetry; in the novels of Scott and George Eliot; in Dickens's "Christmas Carol"; in the poetry of Gray, Crabbe, and Wordsworth. The toiling masses have been redeemed, if not from suffering, at least from contempt. Their special virtues and merits are appreciated. We still speak respectfully of the widow's mite.

It must be confessed at the same time that the doctrine is extreme, such as we should expect from a peasant reformer, solitary, unchecked in his aspirations by experience of a mixed and commercial world. Without wealth, without the accumulation of wealth, neither material civilization, nor anything intellectual or moral that depends on material civilization, could advance. Christendom has had practically to qualify the teachings of its founder and treat them at most as correctives of inordinate devotion to gold.

As Jesus is no communist when he exhorts the rich to give away their wealth, so when he prohibits the exercise of dominion and bids

his disciples be servants of each other, when he rebukes their rivalry for rank by lifting a child in their midst, he is not, as some have fancied, playing the part of a political leveler. He is not the *bon sansculotte* of Camille Desmoulins. He took no part in the political movements of his time, nor does he show any interest in them beyond one or two hostile allusions to Herod. The equality which he enjoins is spiritual only. His words, nevertheless, have taken effect in the political and social as well as in the religious sphere. They have instilled a feeling for equality, though they have not kindled revolution. The wearer of the Triple Crown, with his scarlet train of Cardinals, was far from being an embodiment of the ideal of Jesus. Yet his title of the Servant of the Servants of God, amidst all the titles which proclaimed the lordship of man over his fellows, was a reminder of the Christian ideal.

“Take no thought for your life what ye shall eat, neither for the body what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the

ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much better are ye than the fowls!" "Consider the lilies, how they grow. They toil not, they spin not. And yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass which is to-day in the field and to-morrow is cast in the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith!" "Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." This preaching of carelessness for to-morrow would kill industry and prevent a man from earning his own bread and that of his family, though it might seem less extravagant in a land like Galilee where boon Nature almost of herself supplied simple wants. Nor, whatever may have been done in wild ecstasy by Francis of Assisi, has Christendom ever attempted to give practical effect to such doctrines. At best they have served as alteratives, mitigating the intense and wearing lust of gain

which seems in our own days to be corroding the hearts of men and threatens to deliver the world over to the despotism of the purse.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.” Such a renunciation of private right and of legitimate redress for wrong as this teaching, taken literally, implies would manifestly put an end to law and give up the world to the wrong-doer. Again Christendom has practically qualified the precept of its founder and reduced it to a warning against over-litigiousness. Throughout it must be borne in mind that the reformer’s actual sphere was Galilee with its population of peasants, which he might, without great stretch of imagination, hope to turn into a world of brotherly equality, spontaneous justice, and self-sacrificing love.

It must, perhaps, be admitted that an impracticable standard of self-abnegation, it might almost be said of self-annihilation, has proved rather a snare to Christendom by preventing the formation of a more practicable rule. Men sit in church listening heedlessly to the words of Jesus against care for the morrow or against litigation as words that concern them not, and go out of church to heap up wealth by manipulation of stocks and to press all their advantages in courts of law.

Jesus was not an ascetic or a father of monkery. He came eating and drinking. He was social; it might almost be said convivial. His enemies called him a glutton and a wine-bibber. His first miracle is said to have been wrought at a feast. At fasting he glances as a recognized practice, less to enjoin it than to warn against ostentation. Asceticism and eremitism came to the Thebaid and thence to Catholic Europe rather from the Ganges than from the Lake of Gennesaret. Of what use the monastic orders may have been in the Middle Ages as a counterbalance to the ascendancy of grossness and force, and

whether their service in that way exceeded the disservice done by their fanaticism, their intrigue, and the vices into which they presently fell, are, therefore, questions which need not be raised here. Jesus would not have seen himself reflected in a monk.

The ethical philosophy of Jesus, if we may use the term, seems to rest on the importance of character and motive above formal action. He who looks on a woman lustfully is an adulterer. "From within out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts;" and in the entertainment of such thoughts, even without formal action, the essence of wickedness consists.

The Golden Rule of doing to others as you would they should do unto you was not taught by Jesus alone. It had been taught by Hillel. It may probably be extracted from any system of moral philosophy, even from a system so little altruistic as that of Aristotle's Ethics. It might have been read on the walls of sacred buildings in China by the soldiery of the Christian powers, which was filling that hapless land with massacre and rapine for the advancement of Christian civilization. But

the difference lies in the motive. Are you doing good to others only that they may in return do good to you? Or are you doing it from love of your kind? A Pharisee makes a market of his virtue.

Self-renunciation is carried almost to the pitch of self-annihilation, and, like the extreme precepts of meek submission to wrong and carelessness for the morrow, transcends the possibilities of moral aspiration in the world as it is. In Jesus throughout, as he is presented to us in the Gospels, we meet with a being as near as humanity can come to a disembodied spirit, one possible only in such circumstances as those of his life and mission in Galilee.

Closely allied with hatred of formalism and legalism is the leaning of Jesus to the converted sinner, the returned prodigal, the sheep restored to the fold, the penitent, rather than to those who had never needed the physician. Not that he anywhere dallies with sin. There is nothing antinomian in his teachings. It is to a licentious interpretation of the teachings of St. Paul, if to anything in the

New Testament, that antinomianism is to be traced.

The word *ecclesia*, translated in our version "church," is twice found in the Gospels, where it has rather a strange look; one of the two places being that upon which the claim of the Papacy is founded. We cannot help doubting whether it came from the lips of Jesus. But if it did, he cannot have meant general councils, consistories, synods, and courts of ecclesiastical law; for he says that where two or three are gathered together in his name, there will he be in the midst of them. We can imagine nothing more alien to his mind than the form which, in later ages, the church assumed. But if Christianity was not to be only a school of thought, like Stoicism or Platonism, but a spiritual society formed for mutual aid in godly living and the formation of a religious character, organization was indispensable. Organization necessarily implied authority. By a process easily divined if not historically recorded, authority, originally vested in the congregation, gradually centred in the bishops, to consecrate whose

exaltation Apostical Succession was devised. Ultimately, by a process not less natural, it was engrossed by the Bishop of Rome round whom the imperilled and distracted members of Christendom rallied as their head and protector amidst the dissolution of the ancient world. The office of the Twelve and that of the Seventy was clearly not ecclesiastical but missionary.

Formalism of all kinds Jesus abhors. Apparently he would have disliked ritual, liturgical prayer-books, formal worship of all kinds. He seems to exclude them by enjoining the ever memorable prayer which we may trust oral tradition to have faithfully handed down. Expansion, in this respect, liturgical and æsthetic, when worship came to be a regular and collective function, could not be avoided, though it might have stopped short of the prayer-mill.

Mercy, not sacrifice, was the rule of the Founder of Christendom as it was of the evangelical prophets. Mercy he prefers even to the Sabbath, the ceremonial idol of the Jew. The Sabbath he says was made for man. He admits moral grounds for relaxation.

No dogmatism is put into the mouth of Jesus by the Gospels. Dogmatism could hardly exist before his deification. It seems to have had three principal sources; the theology of Paul, who, however, is perhaps rather ecstatic than dogmatic, and would hardly have treated dogmatic dissent as sin; the Alexandrian theosophy embodied in the Fourth Gospel; and the speculations of the Gnostics and other metaphysical or heretical sects which evoked counter-definitions from the Church. Those definitions became orthodoxy and conditions of church-membership. When the Church unhappily, though perhaps inevitably, had been united to the Empire, orthodoxy became law, and heresy, alas, became treason. Desperate were the shifts to which the Church in her darker days was put in her effort to extract from the sayings of Jesus anything like warrants for persecution and mandates for the Inquisition. What is meant by those awful words about the sin against the Holy Ghost has never been made clear. It can hardly be imagined that sin against the Holy Ghost means de-

parture from the dogmatic ruling of an ecclesiastical Council.

Hatred of formalism and legalism, as deadly enemies of genuine godliness, brought the Founder of Christendom into collision with the Pharisees, whom he denounces as hypocrites, whited sepulchres, destroyers of souls, with a vehemence startling in one so full of loving-kindness. The spirit of the Gospel at its birth was confronted by the spirit of the Talmud, and the issue proved that the struggle between them was unto death. Talmudic Judaism, with its tithing of mint and cummin and its neglect of the spiritual law, recognized its mortal enemy in Jesus. It sought to discredit him before he, invading its citadel, enabled it to take his life. Jesus admits that the Pharisees sat in Moses' seat, and exhorts his disciples to do what the Pharisees bid, but in a spirit unlike theirs. It is strange to find him entering the house of a Pharisee and sitting down to meat, unless his object was to rebuke in a friendly way the formalism which there prevailed. Mortal conflict with the Pharisees probably belongs to the close of the his-

tory. Pharisaism in force could hardly have been encountered in Galilee. While we condemn the Pharisee for his formalism and his hypocrisy, allowance is to be made for his natural opposition to claims which to him would appear impious.

Jesus was himself unmarried. From the obscure words ascribed to him about those who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of God, he would appear to have regarded celibacy as the superior state. It must always be borne in mind in estimating his sense of the value of human relations that he believed the end of the world to be at hand. Papal policy which saw its advantage in a militia of priests detached from family ties, conspiring with false notions of purity imported from the East, might find support for ecclesiastical celibacy in his words. But he bade husband and wife be one flesh and asserted the sanctity of marriage by forbidding divorce, too easy even under the Hebrew law and in other nations licentiously common, saving for the cause of fornication. He parries a casuistical question by saying that in heaven they

neither marry nor are given in marriage. Nothing else have we from Jesus on the momentous subject of marriage and love. What is superior in the Christian idea of marriage and in the Christian treatment of women must be ascribed, not to any precepts of Jesus on those particular questions, but to the general influence of his teaching in favour of purity, loving-kindness, and consideration for the weak.

To the worship of the Virgin has been ascribed the chivalrous feeling of devotion to woman. But that feeling was displayed almost solely toward women of quality, and was really sexual, not in any sensible degree religious. To the mediæval mind the Virgin was not a woman but a deity.

St. Paul improves to some extent upon his master, bidding husbands love their wives; though he, too, in dealing with social and domestic relations, is under the impression that the world is passing away.

The wandering preacher has evidently been estranged by his mission from his family. Rather perhaps his family had been estranged

from him. There is even a harshness in his reputed language about his mother and his brethren, when they stand without desiring to speak with him. He seems, if not to repudiate the domestic bond, completely to merge it in religious brotherhood. It is difficult to see how the worship of the Virgin and the belief in the Immaculate Conception can survive the record of the son's treatment of the mother, or of her evident ignorance that the son's mission was divine. We expect nothing directly from Jesus on the subject of domestic affection. Yet the reputed day of his birth is the festival of the home; and so it may fitly be, considering the impulse given by the Founder of Christendom to all pure and gentle affection, apart from any belief in his divinity or in his coming to atone for sin and to redeem the world.

There were, of course, wide fields of human action to which the peasant prophet of Nazareth was a total stranger, and to which only the most general principles of his teachings could apply. He was a total stranger to politics; a political quietist, willing to render

unto Cæsar, a foreign power of conquest, the things which were Cæsar's, provided Cæsar would allow him to render unto God the things that were God's; willing to pay the tribute, abhorred as impious by the Jew; not shrinking from social intercourse with the detested tax-gatherer. As it turned out, his quietism, transmitted to his Church, ultimately proved a key to political power. An emperor found in the Christians not only a predominant sect but the most submissive and obedient of subjects. Political considerations, probably more than his conversion to Christianity or any miracle of the Labarum, led Constantine to make Christianity the religion of his Empire. Those words, however, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's," together with the declaration that the kingdom was not of this world, were profound in their significance. Had they only been observed, it would have been happy indeed for Christendom, and many of the darkest pages would be torn from the book of history.

Of commerce again, now so mighty an ele-

ment of civilization and life, Jesus could see nothing, saving a little transit trade at Capernaum ; or see only what was revolting to his mind, the traffic of the sellers of cattle and the money changers in the purlieus of the Temple. Whether he saw Tyre and Sidon is doubtful. If he did, it was with the eyes of a Hebrew prophet looking upon them as doomed cities of ungodly wealth. In regard to commerce, as in regard to politics and public life, we have nothing from him but the most general principles, which are those of a wandering preacher, maintained by the hospitality of his hearers, and regarding wealth as a bar against entrance to the kingdom of Heaven.

Everything that was established the Founder of Christendom took as he found it. His mission was to the spirit, not to the frame of humanity. Not only did he, odious as Pharisaism was to him, recognize the Pharisee as the occupant of Moses' seat, but he enjoined upon his disciples conformity to the Pharisaic observances, while he forbade them to do morally what the Pharisee did.

Like John, who bade soldiers be content with their wages and refrain from extortion, Jesus recognized the soldier's trade in the person of the centurion, and in his discourses he uses the imagery of war. It does not follow that he approved war or that he did not detest it. Can the clergy of a State Church, when they bless the battle-flag or chant their *Te Deum* for a victory, perhaps of some power of iniquity, hear the voice of the Founder of Christendom mingling with their choir?

Science was but in its germ, even in Greece. Not the slightest breath, even of its spirit, can have reached Jesus. Of the laws of nature he had evidently no conception. What science regards and explains as nature's order, he took for the direct action of a personal God, who numbered the hairs on our heads, provided our bread, anticipated our prayers, and without whose decree no sparrow fell.

Parables, such as that of the Prodigal Son, that of the sheep strayed and brought back to the fold, that of the good Samaritan, that of the wise and foolish virgins, that of the Pharisee and the Publican, are gems of lit-

erature, and the influence of some of them has been undying. But of the literary world Jesus could see nothing beyond the sacred books of his nation. His saying about the glorious vesture of the lily shows that he had an eye and a heart for beauty. But he can never have seen a statue or a picture, since Jewish iconoclasm prohibited painting and sculpture, at least of the human form.

Whatever by his love of truth Jesus may have done for science, whatever by his moral purity he may have done for art, the entire field both of science and art was beyond his ken.

The ideal of Jesus is the kingdom of God or of heaven, on the transcendent blessedness of which, as well as on the conditions and the inestimable value of admission, he constantly dilates, illustrating them by a variety of figures. What was this kingdom? The ground of the conception, so far as it was terrestrial, probably was a peasant Galilee purged of all social inequalities, of all selfishness, of everything but childlike simplicity of heart, pure self-sacrifice, and brotherly love.

“Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” It is not likely that the seer of such a spiritual Paradise had distinctly present to his mental vision the Roman Empire and the great world at large.

This terrestrial kingdom was to be the believer's portal to everlasting happiness hereafter. But apart from the hereafter the preacher may have been opening a kingdom of spiritual happiness here into which all enter who prefer spiritual excellence, the love and service of their kind, to worldly goods, pleasures, and advancement. The veil of death he failed to raise. We may not be able to look behind it. But so long as we are his true disciples, we are in the kingdom of God.

On the mind of Jesus the idea of a kingdom of Heaven gathering into it all good men took such hold that at last he saw its advent and the consummation of all things as near at hand, so near that they would be witnessed

by some of those who were then listening to his words. This belief in his advent he transmitted to his disciples ; it prevailed during the first ages of the Church, affected all relations of life among Christians, sustained martyrdom, was reluctantly resigned, has from time to time been revived, and is scarcely extinct even now.

Apart from miracles and such events as the Temptation in the Wilderness or the Transfiguration, it is impossible to say what conception Jesus may ultimately have formed of his own character and relation to God ; whether he identified himself with the Messiah or even with Deity. Always we must remember that he was a peasant prophet without any critical or intellectual environment to temper his aspirations or limit his conceptions ; while his followers, mingling perhaps with their spiritual hopes that of sitting on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, may have been pressing him to show himself the Messiah, reveal his divinity, and put forth his power. Nor can we tell precisely what was the impulse which sent

him at last to confront the hostile forces of Jewish orthodoxy in their stronghold at Jerusalem, to declare his character and claims in face of them, and thus to court inevitable death at their hands.

After the last departure from Galilee to Jerusalem, it would seem almost in quest of martyrdom, there are in the life of Jesus two events of importance, which have not only their theological or ecclesiastical but their historical aspect. One is the Last Supper, an authentic account of which, apart from the narrative in the Gospels, was no doubt received and transmitted by St. Paul. The whole mass of doctrine about the Real Presence and Transubstantiation is in the eye of history excrescence on the sacrament of religious brotherhood and devotion to the Founder's ideal which, through all the ages, under many different forms, and in spite of the most miserable perversion, has kept its hold and done its work.

The other event is the Crucifixion; regarded by theology as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world, by history as the great

martyrdom. The life of the Founder of Christendom was the first of many lives offered up by his disciples, and not by his disciples alone, as sacrifices to freedom of opinion. Unhappily the temper of Annas and Caiaphas or of Pilate was not confined to the murderers of Jesus. His own creed of liberty and mercy was perverted into a warrant for murders on the other side. Annas, Caiaphas, and Pilate, considering their position and their environments, must be said to have been eclipsed in guilt, though not in infamy, by men who murdered in the name of Jesus, by Spanish and Roman Inquisitors, by the authors of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, by Philip II and Louis XIV. There is nothing more deplorable in history. Religious bigotry, however, has had too great a load of odium to bear. It has comparatively seldom been murderous, except when the priest or the priest-ridden king has been alarmed, not only for his creed, but the priest for his worldly wealth, and the king for his despotic power. The house of Annas and Caiaphas held rich offices, and Pilate represented an Empire.

Now the sun is low on the lake and on the hillside. The peasant hearers break up, pondering on what they have heard, and disperse to their homes; while he, the Founder of Christendom, having no home of his own wherein to lay his head, goes to find shelter for the night beneath some disciple's lowly roof. Little did the owner of that roof dream that it was receiving as a guest the genius of nineteen coming centuries; perhaps of the whole future of humanity, unless the Spiritual as well as the Supernatural is doomed and science is henceforth to reign alone.

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